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ABSTRACT

As part of a 5-year cycle of accountability and evaluation activities, a study was conducted in 1982 to determine employer satisfaction with the educational system in Hawaii. Employers were asked to provide information on their firm, state their training priorities, express frustrations, and make suggestions on increasing the effectiveness of the educational system in preparing students for employment. Interviews were conducted with vice presidents of personnel and personnel directors from 50 firms, which had not been contacted in prior annual employer surveys and in which service, hospitality, retail, finance, and construction industries were most heavily represented. The study revealed: (1) 94% of the employers felt that employees who had received occupational training in high school were better prepared for employment than those who had not; (2) 76% felt that college vocational education students were better prepared than college students without vocational training; (3) 60% preferred the high school diploma to the Individual Prescribed Program option; (4) 70% said community colleges were doing a good job; and (5) of the 15 firms having hired Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) participants, 88% felt participation had increased their value as employees. Volunteered comments are appended. (DAB)

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FIFTH ANNUAL EMPLOYERS' SATISFACTION SURVEY: FIRST CYCLE UPDATE

Office of the State Director of Vocational Education, Honolulu, HI.

Introduction and Overview

FY-82 marked the end of the first cycle of accountability activities and evaluation which are prescribed by the Educational Amendments of 1976, Title II, P.L. 94-482. As part of these efforts, the Fifth Employers' Satisfaction Survey was concluded with good results. This favorable outcome was not accomplished without sustained determination to avoid some typical educational research pitfalls.

Educators, by their very nature, are change agents. They take students at a given point in their development and impart to them new skills, knowledge, and attitudes. In doing so, they thereby change their clientele. To an extent, this propensity to effect change influences the entire professional orientation of educators. Advocating and expediting change becomes a habit. When confronted with a new form, questionnaire, and/or interview schedule, educators have a tendency to want to make a "few" changes. As a consequence, the data formats change, the questions vary, and the purpose for information collection, itself, often seems to change from one year to the next. Because of this, data collected and reported regarding the same activities are frequently not comparable from one year to the next.

The staff that have worked on the Employers' Satisfaction Survey have largely resisted the temptation to tamper with basic data collection instrument and methodology. There have been some additions throughout the years, but the critical questions on the interview schedule and the method whereby the data have been collected have remained the same.

A high degree of reliability has been obtained over the five-year period. Most major firms in the State have been contacted and interviews with the appropriate administrators conducted. However, next year the interview schedule will be modified to tap new kinds of information not gathered during the first cycle.

Through the mechanism of the Employers' Satisfaction Survey conducted during the first five-year cycle, businessmen have been able to make known their training priorities, express frustrations, and make specific suggestions on how the educational system could be made more effective in preparing students for the world of work. In most cases the comments gathered during the first five years have been of a general nature and have reflected some particular priority of the company being interviewed. On some occasions the range of items put forward by the administrative officer interviewed covered a broad spectrum. In a few cases the concerns expressed have been of a highly specific nature. In these instances it has often been possible to make a referral to a member of the Occupational Development staff of the Department of Education or a staff member of the Chancellor's Office. The comments have been reproduced in charts 1, 2, and 3 of the annual reports.

The sample each year has been derived from a report prepared by the Research and Statistics Office of the Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. This report is designated L3A604 and is titled "Statewide Average Covered Workers." It is a listing of firms arranged in rank order by the average number of persons employed. In 1982, the firms selected for interview ranged from an average monthly payroll of 60 to 2,495. A random table of numbers has been used for selection of the sample. When a firm that had been contacted in one of the canvasses conducte in prior years was selected, the case was deleted and a substitution made. Some firms have occasionally changed their names and others have proved to be

subsidiaries of parent firms that also appeared elsewhere on the list. Every effort has been made to eliminate any duplication before a firm was contacted. The sample size in 1982 was 50.

This year, as in the previous four years, the basic data collection device involved interviews with vice presidents of personnel and personnel directors. The interview format is designed to combine elements of "forced focus" and "open-ended" designs. Specific discrete and/or quantitative assessment items have been used. However, the respondents have been urged to elaborate, qualify, and comment on any given assessment or judgment.

Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln in their book, Effective Evaluation, point to the interview approach as the best device for gathering information in social research. The authors contend: "It is our belief, however, that interviewing--whatever form it might take, but particularly the unstructured interview--is the backbone of field and naturalistic research and evaluation." Mailed questionnaires are admittedly less expensive to administer. However, as Guba and Lincoln point out the interview is more flexible than a questionnaire. It permits a question to be restated if it is not first clearly understood. Interviews are more personal and constitute a better exploratory tool. They are also better than questionnaires in eliciting responses in sensitive areas and permit the interviewer to note the respondents' affective response. Interviews approximate real-life situations more closely than questionnaires. They also provide better sampling because there are fewer refusals.

Extended interviews such as those employed in this evaluation exercise require some type of quid pro quo or a kind of trade. In this case the interviewer provided information about the organization and administration of vocational education for the perceptions, judgments, and assessments of the respondents. Over the last two years, he also provided the respondents with relevant publications dealing with vocational education in Hawaii.

It has often taken up to three different telephone contacts to secure an interview. However, once an interview has been arranged, the respondents all have proved cooperative and most have been even spontaneous in their willingness to share information. The interviews conducted during the first evaluation cycle lasted between one-half hour to three hours. On several occasions, both this year and in the past, the principal respondent called in associates to provide additional perspective.

Findings

The total number of people employed by the firms contacted was 11,826 (refer to Table 1). The average number of employees was 236.

As in the past, service-oriented firms were the most heavily represented. Because so many of the firms in the target group had been contacted in previous years, many substitutions were necessary. As a consequence, the sample is somewhat distorted. The hospitality, retail, finance, and construction industries were most heavily represented (refer to Table 2).

All of the firms had offices or operations in the City and County of Honolulu (refer to Table 3). Nineteen firms had offices on the Big Island and twenty-two had operations on Maui. Thirteen firms had on-going operations in Kauai.

Nearly all of the firms claimed they had employees who had been enrolled in vocational courses during their high school years and who had not had the benefit of postsecondary education (refer to Table 4).

Fifty-six percent of the firms reported that "business" was the area of skill specialization of employees whose educations had been completed at the secondary level (refer to Table 5). Nearly one in five reported having employees who had taken food service courses during their high school years. Almost 5 percent of the firms had employees trained in the mechanical technology areas.

TABLE 1

AVERAGE MONTHLY EMPLOYMENT OF
FIRMS CONTACTED FOR THE 1982 SURVEY

Firm	$\bar{x}$ = 23€	Average Monthly Payroll
Firm 1		433
Firm 2		260
Firm 3		2,495
Firm 4		219
Firm 5		185
Firm 6		184
Firm 7		280
Firm 8		241
Firm 9		209
Firm 10		277
Firm 11		114
Firm 12		284
Firm 13		209
Firm 14		421
Firm 15		141
Firm 16		202
Firm 17		106
Firm 18		116
Firm 19		127
Firm 20		119
Firm 21		213
Firm 22		665

TABLE 1

(continued)

Firm	$\bar{x}$ = 236	Average Monthly Payroll
Firm 23		116
Firm 24		168
Firm 25		113
Firm 26		131
Firm 27		120
Firm 28		192
Firm 29		148
Firm 30		100
Firm 31		113
Firm 32		107
Firm 33		115
Firm 34		192
Firm 35		102
Firm 36		133
Firm 37		107
Firm 38		112
Firm 39		103
Firm 40		100
Firm 41		123
Firm 42		166
Firm 43		165
Firm 44		157
Firm 45		60

TABLE 1

(continued)

Firm	$\bar{x}$ = 236	Average Monthly Payroll
Firm 46		100
Firm 47		802
Firm 48		194
Firm 49		176
Firm 50		111
	TOTAL	11,826

TABLE 2

TYPE OF FIRM

Category	N	%
Agriculture, Fisheries	2	4
Transportation	3	6
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	6	12
Construction	7	14
Wholesale trade	4	8
Service	13	26
Manufacturing	5	10
Retail trade	7	14
Other	3	6
TOTAL	50	100

TABLE 3

COUNTIES OF HAWAII
WHERE FIRMS OPERATE

County	f
Honolulu	50
Hawaii	19
Kauai	13
Maui	22

TABLE 4

FIRMS WITH EMPLOYEES WHO TOOK
VOCATIONAL COURSES IN HIGH SCHOOL

Response	N	%
Yes	48	96
No	2	4
Don't Know	0	0
TOTAL	50	100

TABLE 5

PROGRAM AREA MOST HEAVILY REPRESENTED
IN PRIOR TRAINING OF NEW EMPLOYEES

Program	N	%
Non-applicable	2	4
Agriculture, Fisheries	1	2
Business	28	56
Construction	1	2
Electrical/Electronic		
Food Service	9	18
Health	0	0
Technical Graphic	0	0
Mechanical	2	4
Personal/Public Service		
Other	7	14
TOTAL	50	100

The employer was then asked to focus his or her attention on the performances of persons hired in the skill area reported as being most heavily represented in the firm for the remainder of the "high school hire" questions.

The most critical item on the interview schedule involved a comparison of new employees with vocational education backgrounds in high school with those without such an experience. Of the total sample, 94 percent claimed that those employees who had taken occupational training in high school were "better prepared" for the world of work than those without such training (refer to Table 6). This is an all time high for the survey. Only 2 percent felt vocational education students were "no better prepared" and no participant responded that vocational education students were "less prepared."

This criterion is specified as being significant in Section 104.402(c)(4) of the Federal Regulations. The very positive result should provide secondary, vocational educators with a very legitimate sense of pride.

Employers were next asked to evaluate their new hires who had vocational education in high school against 11 criteria which are frequently used in employment evaluations. A five-point Likert Scale was used.

Forty-six percent of the respondents rated their high school hires a 3 on "technical knowledge" (refer to Table 7). Twenty-four percent gave this group a "good" rating by designating the number 4. The average rating was 3.2 and the mode 3. This was a more positive pattern of response for this item than that obtained in 1981.

The nature of the responses varied greatly again on the item described as "work attitude." Thirty-two percent gave the high school hires a 2 or "poor" rating and 10 percent felt that the employee attitudes were "very good." The average score was 2.7. This was down somewhat from the previous year.

TABLE 6

COMPARISON OF NEW EMPLOYEES HAVING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN HIGH SCHOOL AND THOSE WITHOUT SUCH AN EXPERIENCE

Assessment of Voc. Ed. Trained Employees	N	%
No basis for comparison	0	0
Voc. ed. students better prepared	47	94
Voc. ed. students no better prepared	1	2
Voc. ed. students less prepared	0	0
No opinion	2	4
TOTAL	50	100

TABLE 7

GENERAL EVALUATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION:
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES RECENTLY EMPLOYED

Criterion	Very Poor 1		Poor 2		Neutral 3		Good 4		Very Good 5		No Opinion NA		Mean	Mode	Range
	N	H%	N	H%	N	H%	N	H%	N	H%	N	H%			
Technical knowledge	0	0	10	20	23	46	12	24	1	2	4	8	3.2	3	2-5
Work attitude	0	0	16	32	12	24	13	26	5	10	4	8	2.7	2	2-5
Work quality	1	2	7	14	15	30	22	44	1	2	4	8	3.3	4	1-5
Written communication skills	4	8	25	50	7	14	11	22	0	0	3	6	2.5	2	1-4
Oral communication skills	0	0	8	16	19	38	18	36	2	4	3	6	3.2	3	2-5
Safety consciousness	0	0	4	8	10	20	29	58	3	6	4	8	3.6	4	2-5
Ability to assume responsibility	0	0	5	10	12	24	22	44	3	6	8	16	3.5	4	2-5
Dependability	0	0	6	12	13	26	21	42	5	10	5	20	3.5	4	2-5
Adaptability	2	4	3	6	11	22	20	40	9	18	5	10	3.6	4	1-5
Problem solving ability	0	0	8	16	11	22	12	24	5	10	14	28	3.4	4	2-5
Motivation	0	0	7	14	16	32	19	38	4	8	4	8	3.4	4	2-5
Overall rating	0	0	2	4	21	42	20	40	3	6	4	8	3.5	3	2-5

*"No opinion/not applicable" responses are deleted in calculating the mean and mode.

There was a good deal of consensus on the criterion of "work quality." The largest number of respondents, 44 percent of those participating, awarded a 4 rating, and 30 percent thought the work quality deserved a 3.

One of the lowest average ratings in the last four years involved "written communication skills." This year the mode was 2, and the overall average was 2.5. Eight percent opted for the "very poor" classification.

"Oral communication skills" warranted somewhat higher marks. However, the average score was 3.2, and only 16 percent of the respondents claimed high school hires had "poor" oral communication skills this year.

The curricula of high school vocational education programs is designed to stress safety. The assessment of employers tends to suggest that the emphasis is relatively effective and the results visible. The average rating was 3.6. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents gave former vocational education students a 4 or "good" rating. This was an improvement over the results of last year's canvass.

Personnel specialists had difficulty, as usual, reacting to the "ability to assume responsibility" criterion. The item was interpreted as involving responsibility commensurate with job entry skills level. Many of the employer representatives again have reported that they caution new employees against attempting to assume responsibility at the outset of their service with the firm. It is the policy of many firms to advise new hires to consult with their supervisors when new or particularly difficult situations are encountered. The employer's assessments on this criterion were usually heavily qualified. The average rating was 3.5 and the mode 4.

On "dependability" the mean rating was 3.5. Forty-two percent of the employers gave high school hires a 4 or "good" rating. A large number of employers selected either the "good" rating on the concept of "adaptability." Many of the employers were of the opinion that recent high school graduates were more adaptable at changing jobs than older employees.

On the criterion of "problem solving ability" 28 percent of the employers offered "no opinion." This was the highest incidence of no opinion response. The mode was 4 and the average rating 3.4. The ratings on "motivation" tended to collapse around the middle of the scale. The range of responses on this item was greater than last year.

The average "overall" rating was 3.5. Forty percent of the personnel directors gave high school hires a "good" rating. However, the mode was a neutral 3.

A few years ago, the Board of Education, in response to demands for higher graduation standards, implemented the Individual Prescribed Program (IPP) option for high school students which leads to the Certificate of Completion. This curriculum precludes and replaces the high school diploma for students who are evaluated as being less able. However, students who are referred to the IPP option are those most likely not to be involved in any form of postsecondary training. If they are fortunate, they will most likely enter the world of work on completion of their senior year in high school. As a consequence, it was considered important for the schools to know if the IPP as opposed to the traditional high school diploma, would make any difference in these students' employability. In order to ascertain this, employers were asked, as part of the 1982 survey, to indicate with which of the following statements they would most be in agreement:

(1) The IPP would suffice for our purposes.

(2) Diplomas and certificates are not important to us.

(3) We prefer the high school diploma.

(4) Some form of postsecondary training is important in the preparation of new people for our firm.

Almost two-thirds of the respondents selected number 3 (refer to Table 8). They preferred a high school diploma. Many expressed the view that possession of a diploma revealed a sense of purpose and a degree of self-discipline. These were considered valuable attributes by most personnel managers. "Occupational skills" students and other persons attending high school, counselors, and parents should ponder these findings before making or assisting with educational career decisions.

The personnel directors were asked to focus their attention on "community college hires" for the next portion of the interview. Eighty-six percent said they had hired persons with vocational education backgrounds who had attended a publicly supported community college prior to seeking employment with their firm (refer to Table 9). This is similar to the pattern of response in previous years. Only five respondents said they had no employees of this type.

Once again "business" training was the technical field most heavily represented in the community college training (refer to Table 10). Forty percent of the employers said this was the skill area most heavily represented in their work force. "Mechanical" was second with 22 percent of the total.

The responses to the next two questions were of particular interest. Seventy percent of the employers said the community colleges were doing a "good" job. This was up from last year when about two-thirds awarded a good rating. Sixteen percent gave them a "fair" rating, and only one respondent classified their performance as "poor" (refer to Table 11).

As always, the critical question for the community colleges, as for the secondary schools, involved a comparision of the preparation of former students who had experienced training in a vocational field as opposed to those who had not.

TABLE 8

RESPONSE OF EMPLOYERS TO THE CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION OPTION FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Response	N	%
The IPP would suffice for our purposes.	2	4
Diplomas and certificates are not important to us.	15	30
We prefer the high school diploma.	30	60
Some form of postsecondary training is necessary.	0	0
Other	3	6
TOTAL	50	100

TABLE 9

EMPLOYEES WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION BACKGROUNDS

Response	N	%
Yes	43	86
No	5	10
Don't know	2	4
TOTAL	50	100

TABLE 10

SUMMARY OF PROGRAMS TAKEN BY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRADUATES

Program	N	%
Non-applicable	8	16
Agriculture	1	2
Business	20	40
Construction	4	8
Electrical/Electronic		
Food Service	2	4
Health	1	2
Technical/Graphic	1	2
Mechanical	11	22
Personal/Public Service	2	4
Other	0	0
TOTAL	50	100

TABLE 11

ADEQUACY OF EMPLOYMENT PREPARATION
OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRODUCTS

Assessment	N	%
Good	35	70
Fair	8	16
Poor	0	0
No opinion	7	14
Non-applicable	0	0
TOTAL	50	100

Seventy-six percent of the employers were of the opinion that vocational education students were "better prepared" (refer to Table 12). The pattern of response was similar to that of previous years although down slightly from last year. No respondent expressed the view that vocational education students were "less prepared."

The same attributes or characteristics used to evaluate the job performance of persons hired directly out of high school were also applied against the new employees having a community college background in vocational education.

As with the high school hires, the scale used was 1 to 5, with 5 representing the most positive rating. Former community college students with a vocational education background again appeared well appreciated by their employers.

On the criterion considered most relevant by many educators, "technical knowledge," the average rating was a 3.9. A "good" rating was awarded by 50 percent of the respondents (refer to Table 13). "Work attitude" was also rated high. Fifty-six percent of the respondents gave the community college hires a 4 or "good" rating, and 8 percent said their employees were "very good" with this respect. The average rating for "work quality" was 3.8.

As in previous years, one of the lowest aggregate rating was achieved in the area of "written communication skills." The average score was 3.5 and the mode 4.

Community college products were perceived as being more articulate in the spoken word. The average score for "oral communication skills" was 3.6. Forty-four percent of the respondents gave the former community college students a "good" rating on this item.

Most evaluations of former students "safety consciousness" revolved around a 4. The average rating of 3.8 was sustained on "ability to assume responsibility." However, on this criterion over half of the employers awarded a "good" rating.

TABLE 12

COMPARISON OF NEW COLLEGE EDUCATED EMPLOYEES HAVING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION BACKGROUNDS WITH THOSE WITHOUT

Assessment of the Voc. Ed. Trained Employee	N	%
No basis for comparison	0	0
Voc. ed. students better prepared	38	76
Voc. ed. students no better prepared	4	8
Voc. ed. students less prepared	0	0
Non-applicable	4	8
No opinion	4	8
TOTAL	50	100

TABLE 13

GENERAL EVALUATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION:
COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRADUATES RECENTLY EMPLOYED

Criterion	Very Poor 1		Poor 2		Neutral 3		Good 4		Very Good 5		No Opinion NA		Mean	Mode	Range
	N	H%	N	H%	N	H%	N	H%	N	H%	N	H%			
Technical knowledge	0	0	2	4	6	12	25	50	6	12	11	22	3.9	4	2-5
Work attitude	0	0	3	6	5	10	28	56	4	8	10	20	3.8	4	2-5
Work quality	0	0	1	2	8	16	28	56	4	8	9	18	3.8	4	2-5
Written communication skills	0	0	6	12	10	20	19	38	4	8	11	22	3.5	4	2-5
Oral communication skills	0	0	1	2	14	28	22	44	1	2	12	24	3.6	4	2-5
Safety consciousness	0	0	1	2	9	18	20	40	8	16	12	24	3.9	4	2-5
Ability to assume responsibility	0	0	2	4	6	12	28	56	5	10	9	18	3.8	4	2-5
Dependability	0	0	2	4	2	4	27	54	8	16	11	22	4.0	4	2-5
Adaptability	0	0	1	2	5	10	25	50	7	14	12	24	4.0	4	2-5
Problem solving ability	0	0	2	4	18	36	14	28	7	14	13	26	4.0	3	2-5
Motivation	0	0	2	4	8	16	19	38	10	20	11	22	3.8	4	2-5
Overall rating	0	0	2	4	6	12	26	52	6	12	10	20	3.9	4	2-5

*"No opinion/not applicable" responses are deleted in calculating the mean and mode.

Scores were also comparatively high on "dependability." Here community college products achieved a high average rating of 4.0 and 54 percent of the personnel officers rated the performance as being "good." While the average rating on "adaptability" was 4.0, half of the employers felt that employers in this category warranted a "good" rating.

In the area of "problem solving ability" the marks tended to cluster around the middle area of the scale. However, about one in four employers reported this was inappropriate as they did not expect new employees to do anything other than routine tasks. The average rating was 4.0 and the mode 3.

The mode was 4 for "motivation." Over one-third of the firms felt that community college hires warranted a 4. The average was 3.8.

The "overall" assessment generated an average 3.9. Over one-half of the firms selected 4 to reflect their perception of the aggregate adequacy of pre-service training. No respondent selected a "very poor" designation on the summative assessment.

In order to gain additional evidence regarding employers' satisfaction with traditional vocational education, those in the sample were asked to respond to the question, "Do vocational education students make better employees than those without vocational education?" Ninety percent answered in the affirmative (refer to Table 14). This result is very similar to last year's finding. This also provides corroboration for the positive findings reflected in Tables 6 and 12 where the focus was directed at an assessment of comparative pre-employment alternatives. It is also consistent with the results reported for the surveys conducted during the previous four years.

This year's interview schedule included some consideration of graduates of Employment Training. The Manpower Training Act was originally passed to permit the retraining of former workers who had become unemployed as the result of

TABLE 14

DO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION STUDENTS
MAKE BETTER EMPLOYEES THAN
THOSE WITHOUT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Response	N	%
Yes	45	90
No	3	6
No opinion	2	4
TOTAL	50	100

automation and/or other industrial technology. With the passage of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) in 1973, the mission of this agency was altered. In addition to its traditional function, the Manpower Training Office, now designated as the Employment Training Office, was directed to provide occupational training for the hard-core disadvantaged.

In the State of Hawaii, the Employment Training Office is operated as an arm of the University of Hawaii Community College System. In some counties, such as Hawaii, most training actually takes place on the campuses of a community college. Not all CETA participants are involved in Employment Training programs, but most are.

As in the surveys of the previous two years, there proved to be a small number of business enterprises who reported having interviewed, much less hired, ETO/CETA graduates. As it has been previously mentioned, this low incidence of exposure to this non-traditional approach to vocational training on the part of the businesses in the original sample necessitated a second survey in 1980. Due to scarce resources, it was not possible to do a supplemental survey in 1981 or 1982.

Of the original 50 firms contacted, only 15 could report any recent experience with ETO/CETA trainees (refer to Table 15).

The firms which had hired ETO/CETA graduates had experienced their greatest experience with persons trained in business and clerical skills (refer to Table 16).

Of those having experience with ETO/CETA trainees, the overwhelming majority were inclined to feel that the training had increased the skills and value of the employee to the organization (refer to Table 17).

The employers who reported having hired ETO/CETA graduates in the last five years were also asked to evaluate this group using the same criteria that had

TABLE 15

EMPLOYEES WITH RECENT EMPLOYMENT
TRAINING PROGRAM EXPERIENCE

Response	N	%
Yes	15	30
No	32	64
Don't know	3	6
TOTAL	50	100

TABLE 16

SUMMARY OF PROGRAMS TAKEN BY
EMPLOYMENT (MANPOWER) TRAINING GRADUATES

Programs	N	%
Agriculture	0	0
Business	11	22
Construction	0	0
Electrical/Electronic	0	0
Food Service	2	4
Health	0	0
Technical/Graphic	0	0
Mechanical	1	2
Personal/Public	1	2
Other	0	0
Non-applicable	35	70
TOTAL	50	100

TABLE 17

COMPARISON OF NEW EMPLOYEES HAVING EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PROGRAMS WITH THOSE WITHOUT TRAINING

Assessment of the Voc. Ed. Trained Employee	N	%
No basis for comparison	0	0
Voc. ed. students better prepared	15	30
Voc. ed. students no better prepared	2	4
Voc. ed. students less prepared	0	0
Non-applicable	33	66
No opinion	0	0
TOTAL	50	100

Note: The two negative replies were from employers who had hired trainees some time ago and wished to express their initial frustration with the program.

been employed with the high school hires and community college trained groups. Comparatively high ratings were observed in the areas of "work attitude," "work quality," "safety consciousness," and "ability to assume responsibility" (refer to Table 18). The average rating for those criteria were 3.8 or 3.7. This is fairly consistent with last year's findings. However, the range of ratings did indicate that different employers had encountered different experiences. The overall rating was up to 3.5 which is higher than the previous year. As has been mentioned before, the relatively small number of employers that had experience with ETO/CETA trained employees precludes any extensive discussion of this group as part of this survey.

Comments Volunteered

As in previous years, the comments and spontaneous remarks proved the most interesting portion of the interviews. Almost everyone had something to say about the public high schools and many elaborated sufficiently to include the elementary grades as well.

Almost one in three complained about the way the public schools handle basic skills instruction. Many employers citing the experience of their own children complained of learning by rote, excessive use of worksheets and a lack of creativity in teaching strategies. The image of the Hawaii public school teacher as an effective and dedicated professional has evidently undergone some substantial revision in recent years. Employers clearly do not feel that many teachers hired in the last 15 years have the competency in teaching language arts and mathematics that they would expect. While basic skills are not the primary responsibility of vocational education instructors, high technology and good-paying jobs require a high degree of mathematics and language arts literacy.

Of greater concern to vocational educators was the lack of confidence evidenced by some employers in the technical curriculum. Almost one in ten employers do not feel the standards for technical instruction are high enough. Many

TABLE 18

GENERAL EVALUATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION:
EMPLOYMENT TRAINING (MANPOWER) PROGRAM

Criterion	Very Poor 1		Poor 2		Neutral 3		Good 4		Very Good 5		No Opinion NA		Mean	Mode	Range
	N	H%	N	H%	N	H%	N	H%	N	H%	N	H%			
Technical knowledge	0	0	2	4	4	8	7	14	2	4	35	70	3.3	NO/NA	2-5
Work attitude	0	0	1	2	4	8	5	10	4	8	36	72	3.8	NO/NA	2-5
Work quality	0	0	0	0	6	12	7	14	2	4	35	70	3.7	NO/NA	3-5
Written communication skills	0	0	1	2	8	16	4	8	1	2	36	72	3.3	NO/NA	2-5
Oral communication skills	0	0	1	2	8	16	5	10	0	0	36	72	3.3	NO/NA	2-4
Safety consciousness	0	0	0	0	4	8	9	18	1	2	36	72	3.7	NO/NA	3-5
Ability to assume responsibility	0	0	0	0	4	8	10	20	0	0	36	72	3.7	NO/NA	3-4
Dependability	0	0	0	0	5	10	9	18	0	0	36	72	3.6	NO/NA	3-4
Adaptability	0	0	0	0	6	12	9	18	0	0	35	70	3.6	NO/NA	3-4
Problem solving ability	0	0	1	2	5	10	7	14	1	2	36	72	3.5	NO/NA	3-5
Motivation	0	0	0	0	7	14	7	14	1	2	35	70	3.6	NO/NA	3-5
Overall rating	0	0	1	2	6	12	8	16	0	0	35	70	3.5	NO/NA	3-4

*"No opinion/not applicable" responses are deleted in calculating the mean and mode.

expressed the feeling that the goals of "pre-vocational" training and "career exploration" were not meeting many of the needs of students and/or industry. Many expressed the view that high school hires could be brought into their organizations at attractive salary levels above the minimum wage level. They expressed the view that an eighteen-year-old person can assimilate most of the skills necessary to be a proficient and productive member of their organization in high school. Some felt that part-time attendance at a community college should be urged to sharpen these skills learned at the secondary level.

Almost one in ten employers were critical of application skills. The personnel managers argued that instruction and advisement in this area should take place during the senior year and not the freshman year of high school. However, they also frequently expressed the opinion that a student should have experienced work on a part-time basis either through a cooperative education program or an after-school job before they solicit full-time employment. They feel that such an experience brings a young person down-to-earth and imbues in them a sense of self-discipline.

Attitudes on the part of the employee was once again a major concern. Employers welcome positive young people with a willingness to learn. They feel that many younger workers have unrealistic expectations and do not feel the need to develop a good work record.

Directors of personnel were most critical of community college hires in the area of standards. Many are cynical and are under the impression that community college instructors appease students and award inflated grades to be popular. They feel that the very nature of vocational programs does impose a structure and order to instruction that is more systematic than that offered in general education.

However, they are also concerned about liaison with industry. They do not appear to know what counselors and placement officers do and are bewildered when their calls are occasionally not returned.

Nevertheless, they are very pleased with the job the University of Hawaii has done in the area of community college education.

As has been previously mentioned, very few employers in the sample had taken advantage of the Employment Training Office program. Only 15 of the 50 firms sampled had recently hired a graduate of that program. Because of the limited number of respondents, it was first considered wise to delete any mention of the program from the results. However, the responses to those who had hired ETO graduates was very positive. This was particularly true in the business education area. ETO graduates were perceived as needing a good deal of supervision but performing well at that for which they were hired. It would probably be useful to do another special study in this group in the future.

CHART 1

COMMENTS VOLUNTEERED ABOUT
RECENT HIGH SCHOOL HIRES

- We have trouble hiring high school graduates in Maui County...the competition with hotels is considerable...Lahaina is particularly tough.
- The liquor laws make it difficult for us to hire young people.
- Need better typing skills...for our firm 45-50 w.p.m. is necessary.
- Graduates need more training in basics...they can't do fractions...decimal skills are satisfactory for most.
- Basic skills is the weakest area...the indifference of most elementary school teachers is inducing families who can afford it to send their kids to private schools...it's a shame.
- English must be taught correctly...pidgin may be "in" with some kids, but it won't get them a job.
- Cooperative education should be a part of every student's curriculum who plans to seek work on graduation.
- Why do applicants come in groups? Are they that insecure? I want to deal with them as individuals and not members of a pack.
- The community colleges are doing a pretty fair job.
- We've never heard from a community college placement office.
- Schools need to stress the importance of initiative.
- Graduates need to adapt to the business world...cooperative education would assist in this process.
- A cooperative educational experience is critical for those who wish to go to work right out of high school.
- Our public schools should stress math...we give a math test to all applicants... it's geared to the 7th grade level...a large number can't pass it.
- Tourists can't understand non-standard English...let's discourage the use of pidgin in public schools.
- Many high school graduates can't fill out applications...many can't spell and don't interview well...with us the interview is critical.
- Faculty unions have created stagnation in the public school system...the prevailing attitude seems to be "do no more than is absolutely necessary."

- Graduates need better reading skills...they don't and/or can't read our in-service publications...as a result they don't stay current and, as a consequence, make mistakes.
- There's a need to teach people what is expected in business.
- The attitude about going to work is good...once on the job, it can change.
- Work ethic varies widely by high school of origin.
- Teachers are not acting as motivators.
- The handwriting of those in the repair service and sales departments is terrible...we spend half of our time trying to figure out what these young people are trying to communicate.
- The dignity of all craft labor needs to be stressed.
- Students need to have a sense of responsibility.
- Students should have some part-time work experience prior to entering the full-time job market.
- The skills contests put on by the schools are excellent.
- Language arts skills should receive major attention.
- Schools need to teach social skills...students need to speak correctly...pidgin does not go in our business...it may be "cute" but it is inappropriate in a financial institution.
- Students need to improve their attitude...the world does not owe them a living... graduates are too lax and too lazy...they don't show initiative.
- High school students need to have more respect for their teachers...however, the teachers should also make strenuous efforts to ensure that such respect is deserved.
- Better guidance is needed...high school types don't interview well.
- The cooperative-education program is good...we would welcome an expansion of that program.
- High school graduates seeking employment lack speaking skills and oral comprehension...they don't express themselves well and generally don't listen carefully...I give the directions for our test orally...you would be surprised how many applicants do the wrong thing...they don't realize that this was the most important part of the test until it's too late.
- Applicants don't know the routine of a business office...they're not prepared for regimentation.

- We hire only experienced people...they must have a successful work history... we don't want to take chances...students should get a part-time job in high school to establish their credibility as a responsible employee.
- English language proficiency is critical...we ask them to write a sample letter as part of the application process...poor grammar and spelling don't go with us.
- I'm not sure what the public schools are doing...their graduates, for the most part, are immature...we don't usually hire them.
- High school graduates that we've hired are not problem solvers.
- They need to type at least 60 w.p.m....not many of them can.
- We like to cross train...our people must be flexible.
- We hire about one in five of the so-called "high school" hires...we hire only the best...attitude is so important...we're tolerant but only to a certain point.
- Basics must be stressed...more discipline and purpose at the elementary level is essential.
- We're a Japanese owned development firm...we prefer the more practical education provided here to the overly theoretical curriculum in our own country.
- Graduates must be able to read instructions...even in moving, the drivers, loaders, and helpers need to be familiar with basic business procedures...there is a lot more paper work now than there used to be.
- All of our business communications must be precise...the older people in the moving business are having trouble adapting...they're not as flexible as the younger ones...many of our positions that used to be classified as unskilled are now semi-skilled or skilled.
- Our young girls have trouble with the pressure...in our business you have to take belligerent calls from customers, attorneys, and the military in stride.
- We don't need people with postsecondary training...send us a good high school graduate with DECA experience.
- Schools need to work on attitude...most graduates are not emotionally prepared to enter the work force.
- We actually prefer people right out of high school...they can handle the physical aspects of the job and are more open to suggestions regarding their work style.
- Schools need a dress code..."excessively" casual attire may produce casual attitudes about work.

- The high schools could do more particularly in the business area...career exploration and pre-vocational training are not enough for some students... many high school graduates have the innate ability to be employed above the level of "job entry"... however, they need the advanced training.
- Communication skills need improvement.
- The only high school hires we employ are as materials processing and records clerks.
- College is not for everyone...high school vocational programs should be more intense to provide the skills for those who wish to go to work on graduation.
- We have hired people who looked good on paper...however, the promise of substantial productivity was not realized.
- Students need more conceptual training...they're too "tree-oriented" as opposed to being "forest-oriented"...they don't see the big picture.
- My biggest gripe is their writing ability...they can't identify an incomplete sentence...clerical people must have good language arts skills.
- I think the public schools are doing a good job.
- The schools must involve parents more...parents have lost faith in the public school system.
- The teachers' union is no longer playing a creative and positive role...the union is fostering attitudes which discourage creativity and spontaneity.
- High school graduates can't complete an application.
- We want training in basic skills...but when it comes to specific operations, we want them to do it our way.
- Reading comprehension is the main problem.
- High school hires need more math.
- We have high school graduates that can't fill out an application...they don't know anything about fringe benefits or various types of work incentive plans.
- Typing is not neat...we don't require great speed but accuracy and neatness in presentation is essential.
- Young people are unaware of how a business operates...they don't have the spirit of proprietorship...they need to value excellence and pride...they don't have any real concern about a job...they just want a paycheck.
- High school graduates know nothing at all about how you get a job.
- Attitude and personal appearances are critical.

- The attitude of most high school graduates is bad...the world doesn't owe them a living...high schools should teach values.
- It's important to learn to be flexible...most technical skills are learned on the job, but they need the basic skill training prior to seeking employment.
- Secretaries need to know grammar...typing is not enough...many can't draft a letter or proof their own work.
- Students need to have some job experience in high school...this could either be cooperative education or a part-time job after school.
- The elementary school experience is critical...too many Hawaii teachers are indifferent...they teach by rote and make excessive use of worksheets.
- We're generally satisfied with the schools...however, to function well in the occupations represented in our business you need to be able to speak good standard English.
- The interview is very important particularly for high school hires.
- We stress "growth paths"...we want them to learn as much about the business as possible...transfer in place or for promotion is always possible.
- High school hires are weak in math and English comprehension.

CHART 2

COMMENTS VOLUNTEERED ABOUT
COMMUNITY COLLEGE HIRES

- Math is the main problem.
- The community colleges need to improve their communications and liaison with industry...some colleges do a better job of this than others.
- Private business college graduates are not as good as most of those from the public colleges.
- Graduates need to demonstrate more maturity.
- Kapiolani Community College is doing a good job in nursing.
- The two-year graduates in nursing from the community colleges are as good as those from the four-year colleges.
- Our experience with young people has not been good...since 1977 we've made it a practice to hire only older men.
- We like to hire construction workers as stevedores...they have good work habits.
- As a law firm, we have some problems with Kapiolani Community College's para-legal program...they need to do a little "reality testing" with their curriculum.
- The standards of the community colleges and the private business schools are too low...our entry level criterion is 75 w.p.m. with no "type-overs"...vocational education should stress excellence...vocational educators should concentrate on those students who show the greatest promise for high productivity for a while instead of spending most of their resources on people who are likely to be marginal workers with dubious credentials in skill areas.
- We like the applicant to have experience...someone has to have hired them first... I know that sounds unfair, but we must have a work history before we consider an applicant.
- The community colleges are a circus...some of our people teach at the colleges part-time...they tell me the student attitudes are appalling.
- Community colleges in Hawaii are glorified high schools...standards are not high enough.
- We would like to see "specialization" by college...there is too much duplication of effort.
- Skill levels of graduates are not that much better than those employed directly out of high school...private business college graduates are worse though.

- The colleges should raise standards...the curriculum should be more intensive.
- Graduates who continue to live at home don't appreciate the importance of survival.
- There is a great need for more on-the-job training.
- Ethical behavior is important...we look for this quality.
- The interview is critical...writing is important...the course on how to find a job should be offered in the senior year.
- Good math skills (8th grade level) are important to us.
- Attitude is everything.
- The community colleges are doing a good job.
- Appearance is very important...our representatives visit people in their homes... often the woman of the house is alone...she must be assured of the integrity of our representatives from the outset...someone who shows up for a job interview inappropriately groomed or dressed will not be seriously considered.
- We wish we had more assistance in employment from the community colleges...when we call them, we need same day service...they don't seem to understand this.
- We don't know much about the Kapiolani Community College's distributive education program...they don't seem very aggressive.
- We are unaware of the Leeward Community College program...we have over 650 employees involved in marine technology-related areas...have them send someone out.
- The interview is critical...applicants need to establish eye contact...appearance is also important.
- You can't hire a sloppy-looking person in the food service industry...people tend to make the association...sloppy workers may indicate the food was prepared in unsanitary conditions.
- Many of the immediate aspirations of community college hires are unrealistic... you must have some experience before you can get promoted...some of them don't realize this.
- Community college students act like they're still in high school...most of their instructors accommodate their expectations...most of the offerings provided by community colleges are not really at the collegiate level or that of a good technical institute.
- I think the program being used now is very good.
- Community colleges need to get the work ethic across...graduates should have pride in their work.

- Attitude is everything in the passenger transportation business.
- We need pride and a personal commitment on the part of the graduate.
- More cooperative education experience would be helpful...graduates need to be more realistic about what full-time employment will involve.
- The colleges should take more leadership in assimilating immigrants...we'd like to hire more multi-lingual people. Well-trained emigres could prove a desirable employee pool.
- The colleges need to provide more in-service training activities in the evening... we'd pay all of the students' fees.
- Our firm is informal...we don't mind the graduates preference for casual dress.
- A lot of people we've hired thought they knew more than they did.
- I think the community colleges are doing a good job.
- Community colleges are meeting our needs.
- The people we've hired with "related instruction" are generally well trained.
- Attitude is all important.
- Attitude is critical...I won't hire a person who doesn't have a good attitude.
- Colleges need to teach people how to handle stress...that's critical for our management trainees.
- The community colleges need to provide an instructional program on "safety" for drivers of commercial vehicles...they need to know what to do in emergencies.
- We are happy with the colleges' willingness to provide in-service opportunities... however, colleges need to guarantee us that our people actually attend...we provide them with renumeration.
- We like community college graduates...their attendance and perseverance shows motivation and discipline.
- Graduates need to be articulate...composure during the interview is important.
- The community colleges are doing a good job in the vocational education area.
- The liaison with University of Hawaii's various nursing programs has not been good...however, they seem to be inflexible...much of what they're doing is irrelevant.
- Community colleges do a better job in textiles than Manoa does with their design program...the difference is having some "hands-on" experience.

- Graduates need greater motivation...local kids are less assertive...island kids interview differently than those from the mainland...graduates from the mainland are more open, have better communication skills and are generally more confident...local graduates don't sell themselves...we want them to do a selling job on us.

- Wouldn't change anything...we've obtained some good welders and heavy equipment repairmen from the community colleges.

CHART 3

COMMENTS VOLUNTEERED ABOUT EMPLOYMENT
TRAINING OFFICE (MANPOWER) HIRES

- We've hired only one, but she's been great.
- Individual motivation is all important...WIN didn't work.
- ETO graduates leave with a false sense of security...I can see why it's necessary for them to be "gung ho"...however, the reality of the world of employment sometimes comes as a shock.
- We have good relations with ETO staff personnel...they work at being helpful.
- The ETO should teach some basic vocabulary.
- Personality in retailing is more important than training.
- ETO needs greater variety...for the most part they offer the same four programs year after year...this isn't the diversity and flexibility we expected or believe was intended.
- More flexibility in the curriculum is needed.
- The CETA training program had no relevance for the job for which we hired the graduate.
- CETA people don't stay long with us...however, we still hire them.
- Life-long learning is critical...the technology is changing so quickly people must have a mental fix that helps them to adapt.
- ETO/CETA people tend to desire more supervision...they want to be led.
- Graduates need to accept more responsibility.
- I used to feel that the country needed a good depression to improve work attitudes...I've changed my mind...being out of work doesn't improve anything.
- Graduates do learn to know that we need a day's work for a day's pay to stay competitive.
- We need employees with a better background in basic skills...they don't read and write well enough.
- Too many employees reject in-service training opportunities...they fall behind.
- Many of those we hire can't write as well as we would like...they don't interview well...with our firm the interview is 90 percent of the application...good interview and you've got the job...most are shy and evasive...they must be outgoing and reflect confidence in themselves.

- We've been very pleased with the clerical skills people we've hired from ETO.
- We hire a lot of people in accounting who are immigrants...the ETO program gives them the in-service they need...we're very happy with their performance.

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